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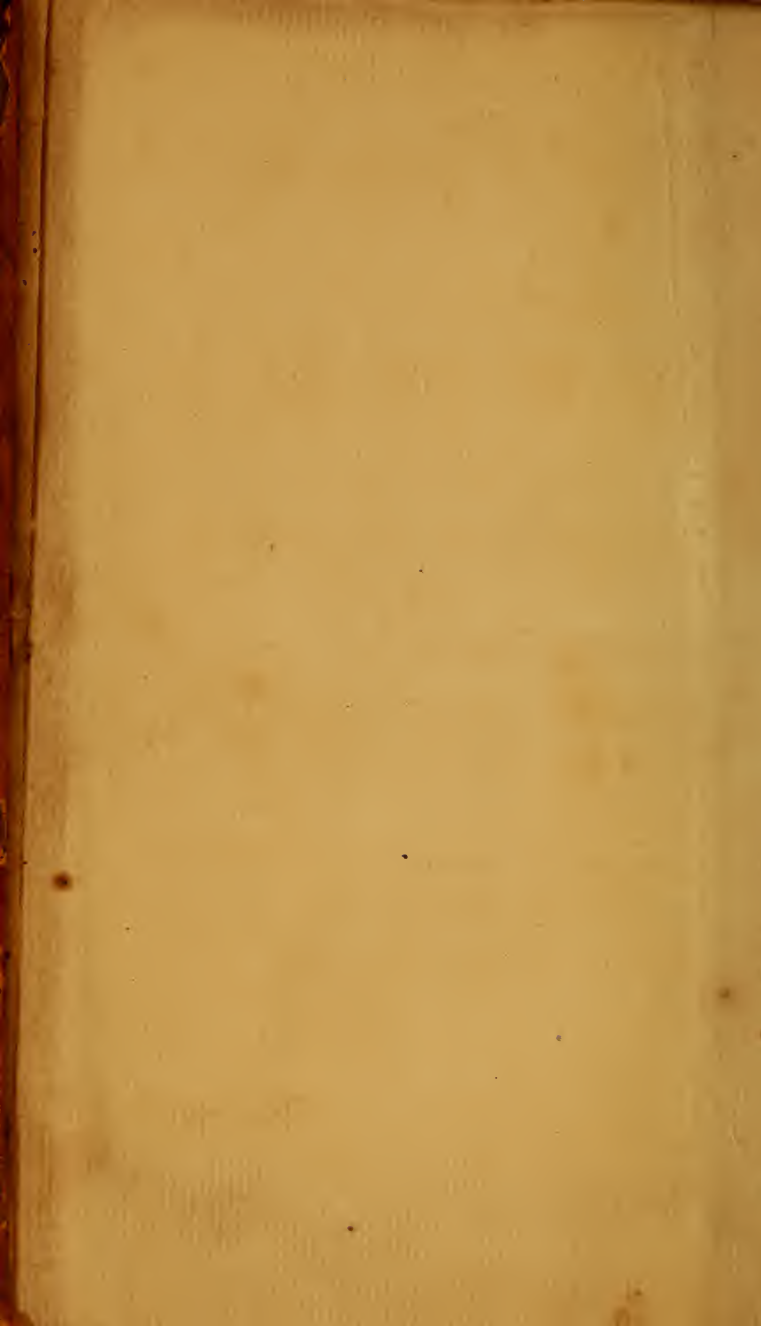
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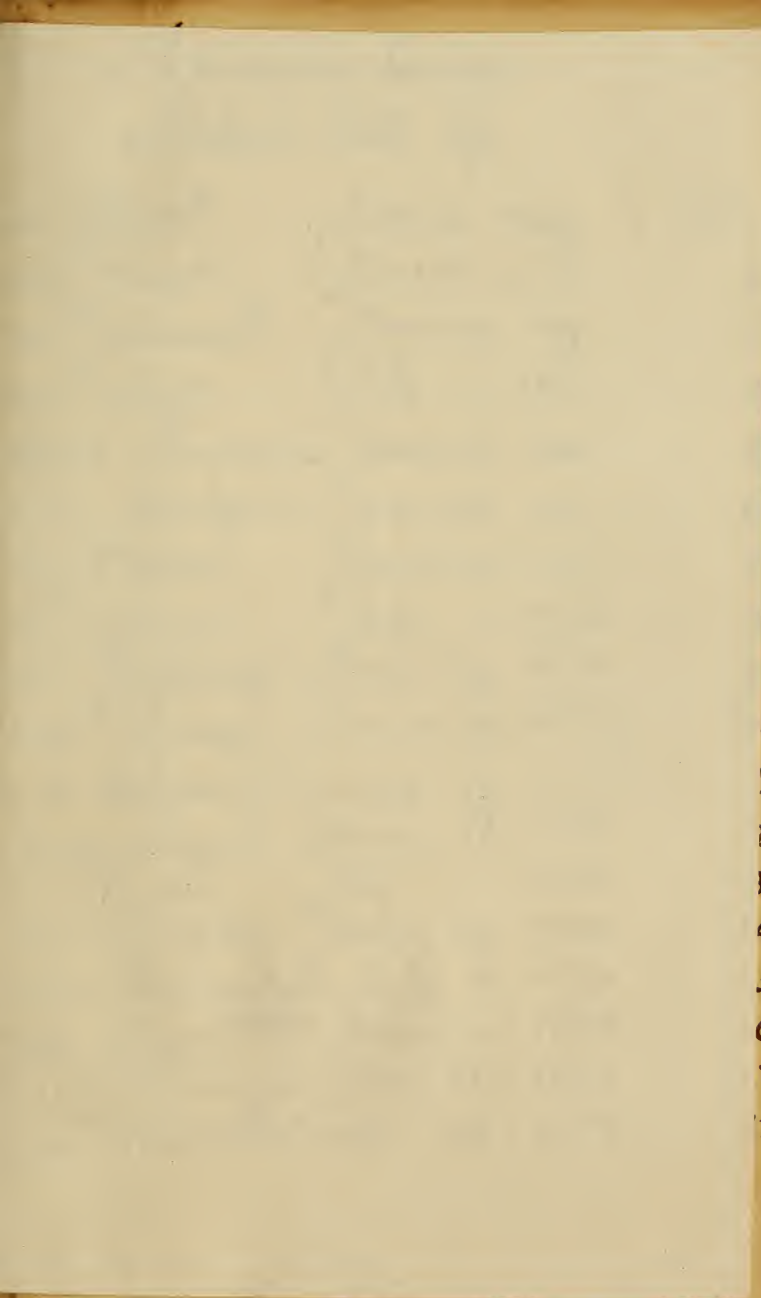
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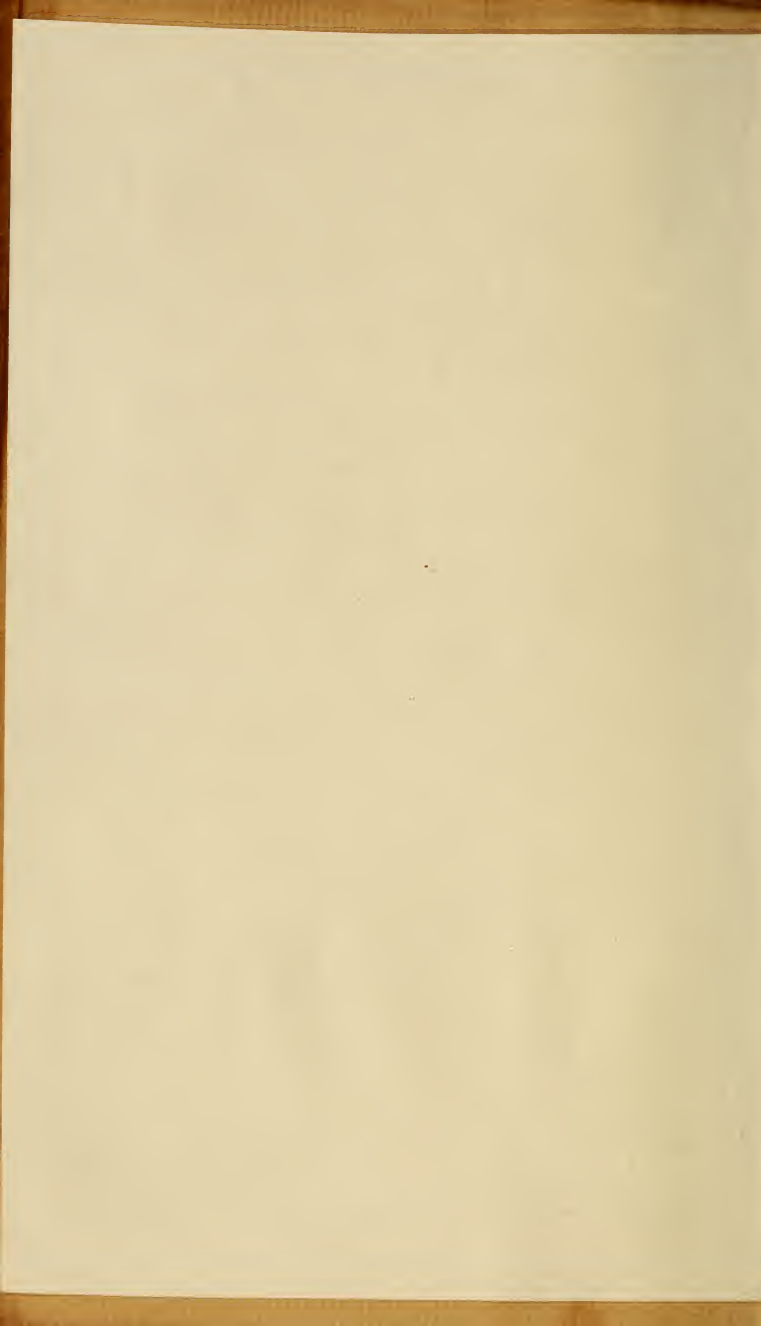
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Reformation Sermons
at Salter's Hall by

Tac: Merrell . . .	June 27 . 1709 . . .	9 ^o . 1 . .
Sam ^o Wright . . .	June 27 . 1715 . . .	2 . . .
Sam ^o Rosewell . . .	June 29 . 1719 . . .	3 . . .
Dan ^o Mayo . . .	July . 1 . 1717 . . .	4 . . .
Moses Lowman . . .	June 27 . 1720 . . .	5 . . .
John Barker . . .	June 26 . 1721 . . .	6 . . .
Dan ^o Neal . . .	June 25 . 1722 . . .	7 . . .
Jos ^a Bayes . . .	July . 1 . 1723 . . .	8 . . .
Jos ^h Denham . . .	June . 29 . 1724 . . .	9 . . .
Sam ^o Pricco . . .	June . 28 . 1725 . . .	10 . . .
B A Atkinson . . .	June . 29 . 1726 . . .	11 . . .
George Smyth . . .	June . 26 . 1727 . . .	12 . . .
Ob: Hughes . . .	July . 1 . 1728 . . .	13 . . .
Tho ^o Leavesley . . .	June . 29 . 1730 . . .	14 . . .
John Partington . . .	July . 2 . 1733 . . .	15 . . .
John Guyse D ^D . . .	June 30 . 1735 . . .	16 . . .
David Jennings . . .	June 27 . 1737 . . .	17 . . .
Sam ^o Chandler . . .	Sep ^r . 25 . 1738 . . .	18 . . .

A
S E R M O N

Preach'd to the

S O C I E T I E S

F O R

Reformation of M A N N E R S,

A T

SALTER's-HALL,

On M O N D A Y, J U N E 29, 1724.

By J O S E P H D E N H A M.

Publish'd at their Request.

L O N D O N :

Printed for E M A N. M A T T H E W S, at
the *Bible* in *Pater-Noster-Row*, 1724.

A

SEYMOUR

COLLIERIES

OF

THE COUNTY OF MIDDLESEX

IN

THE PARISH OF ST. MARTIN

IN THE CITY OF WESTMINSTER

BY JOHN DAVENANT

Printed by J. DAVENANT

1700

Printed by J. DAVENANT
at the Sign of the Crown in St. Martin's Lane



T O

Sir JOHN GONSON, Knt.



N Active Concern for the Welfare of Mankind is one of the greatest Excellencies of the human Nature, and is so divine a Temper, that it fills up a Character with every Thing that is great and lovely.

THE steady Zeal you have discover'd thro' a regular Course of acting, for the Purposes of the Reformation, cannot but give a lasting Pleasure to your own Mind on Reflection, and spread a Joy among the other worthy Gentlemen, pursuing the same generous Designs.

WHEN Persons of such a Character, and Conduct are invested with Magistracy, it gives a Credit to the Bench, lays the surest Foundation for the publick Happiness, defeats their Hopes, who enter into Measures to debauch and enslave us, and inspires the Laws against Prophaneness with Terror, where the Methods of Clemency have hitherto been ineffectual.

IT

DEDICATION.

IT is at the unanimous Request of the Societies, sensible of the Honour, and unwearied Service you have done their common Design, that the following Sermon is inscrib'd to your Name: And however mean and imperfect the Composure is, yet I know the Subject is very acceptable to you, and will be so to every serious Mind.

BE animated, Sir, with an undaunted Firmness of Mind, and Resolution in so good a Cause.

MAY many in the Magistracy, encouraged by your Example, be excited to engage, with equal Zeal, in the same Interest. May you live many Years a Life of the most extensive Usefulness, and have the Pleasure to see the Reformation of Manners make it's Way with greater Success thro' every Opposition. May the Special Blessing of God in this Life be on You and Yours, and hereafter the Rewards of Eternal Life.

I am,

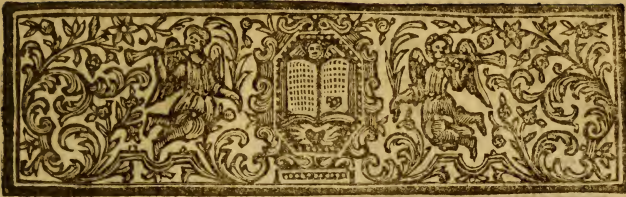
SIR,

Your most Obedient

And most Humble Servant,

LONDON
July 6, 1724.

JOSEPH DENHAM.



Acts X. Part of Ver. 38.

---Who went about doing good---



THE Design of Christianity is to make Men good, and to keep them so. Its Institution is the most Perfect, as it not only contains the best System of Doctrines, and Laws; but as it comes recommended to us by the Example of the Son of God himself.

THE whole Tenor of our Lord's Actions is the most genuine Comment on all its Precepts; and all that moral Goodness, which makes up the principal Part of our holy Religion, is express'd after the fairest Manner, in the Conduct of the great Author, and Finisher of our Faith.

AND whatever has a Tendency to promote the same End, to make Men wiser and better in reference to both Worlds, cannot but be very beneficial in it self, and acceptable to God: *For in every Nation, he who doth Righteousness is accepted with him.* *

* Acts x. 35.

THE Words I have now read, are Part of the Sermon, which the Apostle Peter, by divine Direction, communicated to him in Vision, preach'd to Cornelius the Roman Centurion, as an Earnest of the Favour God designed for the Gentile World.

THE Calling of the *Gentiles to a better Hope*, perpetually enflamed the Minds of the Jews, who had a strong Conceit of their own Privileges, and looked on all the Rest of Mankind, as a Company of Reprobates, who were without God in the World, or any Interest in those special Blessings, which they expected from their Messiah: And tho' our Lord before his Ascension had given his Disciples an express Command *to go and teach all Nations*, * yet it was a considerable Time before they understood this Commission in the Latitude he intended. This was one of those great Truths, which at first they were not able to bear a full and distinct Discovery of, and which, in Compassion to their present Prejudice, and Incapacity, was reserved to the Times of the Coming of the Holy Ghost, when they were to be fully instructed in it.

IN this Sermon the Apostle reports to Cornelius, and those who were with him, what he, and others who were Eye-Witnesses of the Facts, had both seen, and heard of the Actions of our blessed Lord and Saviour. In General, he tells them, that whatever Prejudices they had received against, or whatever Reports they had heard of him, reflecting either on his Doctrine, or Conduct, *he went about doing good*. His whole Life was filled up with the greatest Instances of Kindness to Mankind, by a com-

* Matt. xxviii. 19.

passionate Instruction of the Ignorant, by *healing all Manner of Diseases among the People*, by leaving nothing unattempted that was proper to reform the Manners of a corrupt and degenerate Age. *He went about doing good.*

AND whereas this at first was only reported to them, and it might be objected, that they had not seen these Things themselves, God was pleased afterwards to give such Evidence of the Truth of Christianity as was necessary, and if properly attended to, sufficient to remove and conquer every Prejudice, by enabling those who were Eye-Witnesses, to do as great and strange Things as they testify'd were done by their Lord and Saviour.

WHAT I intend from this Subject, is to represent and improve the Example of our Blessed Saviour, to justify and encourage every Design, that has a Tendency to do good either to the Bodies, or Souls of Men. And I perswade myself, that whoever will soberly consider the Nature and Design of the Societies for restraining the scandalous Immoralities, and reforming the Manners of the present Age, must acknowledge, that herein they follow the great Example of their Lord, and that on this, as well as other Principles, they are to be vindicated, assisted, and encouraged.

THE Method in which I would manage this Subject shall be to consider,

1. THE Character that is here given of our Blessed Saviour. *He went about doing good.*

2. OUR Obligations to imitate him. And then

3. WHAT Purposes these Truths may serve, suitable to the Occasion of our present assembling.

I SHALL consider the Character that is here given of our Blessed Saviour. *He went about doing good.*

THAT this is his true and genuine Character, appears from the whole History of his Life. All his Acts of Favour to Sinners, who had brought various Miseries on themselves, thro' their own Folly, and who were acting inconsistent both with their Duty, and Interest, in direct Opposition to his kindest Advice, and most friendly Admonitions, infer both the Excellency, and Diffusiveness of his *doing good*. One entire Goodness is very evident throughout the whole of his Conduct. How many are the Memorials of it? How amiable does this render him? How worthy of our strictest Imitation?

His tenderest Concern reached to the Souls and Bodies of Men in every State, and under every Circumstance of Life.

HIS Instructions were all designed for a publick Good, and with this View brought down to the meanest Capacity in every Particular, that affected the present, or future Happiness of Men. With what peculiar Meekness of Temper did he endeavour to remove the Prejudices, to detect and confute the Errors of the Ignorant, accommodating himself to their Dispositions and Capacities with whom he was concerned, and to the Circumstances, and present Exigencies of Things, so as did best conduce to the promoting his great End. With what Sweetness and Authority were all his Instructions tempered, the more effectually to engage the Mind to attend the Evidences of Truth, and to fasten a Conviction. Fire and Faggot was by no Means his Method to profelitate, or reform Mankind. Nothing that might deter a timorous, or discourage
a weak

a weak Disciple, could ever be observed in him ; but the most engaging Means were steadily pursued to reclaim those, who opposed themselves, and to establish the wavering in the Truth, Excellence, and Importance of his Doctrines and Precepts:

HIS private Converse, as well as his publick Teaching, was managed with all that Compassion and Wisdom, that none might have any just Occasion to be affrighted or discouraged ; but that all might be pleased, delighted, and engaged to embrace divine Truths, and to submit to his Precepts. Hence all who conversed with, or heard him, must *bare Witness of the gracious Words that proceeded out of his Mouth.* *

WITH what becoming Zeal, animated with a just Sense of the Honour of God, and the Good of Mankind, did he attempt a compleat Reformation, mixing proper Reproofs with his Counsels. The Vices of the Age he exposed, and endeavoured by all fitting Methods to amend, tho' supported and countenanced by Persons of the greatest Name. Offenders of all Sorts he dealt plainly and sincerely with ; nor could any Considerations prevail with him to be silent, or indifferent, under growing Prophaneness ; for he pitied the Souls, and was desirous to prevent the Ruin of Sinners.

His Zeal in this Service was uniform, and always in Proportion to the Greatness of the Crime, the Nature of the Offence, and the Necessity of the Case, neither fearing the Frowns of the Great, nor the Reproaches of the Rabble.

He knew too well the real Worth and Value of a Soul to neglect any Opportunity, that offered

* Luke iy. 22,

to reclaim the Sinner from the Errors of his Ways. How fearful, how terrible is it to see a Person going to eternal Destruction undisturb'd, when the seasonable arresting him in his horrid Progress, might possibly bring him to proper Reflections on his irregular Conduct, and be a Means to prevail with him to return?

How circumspect was his own Deportment, that his Example might not be contradictory to the Truths he taught, to the Laws he prescribed, or to the Reformation he attempted? His Re-proofs were all supported, not only from the Nature, and mischievous Consequences of Sin, but by the Exemplariness of his own Conversation; for *he was separate from Sinners*, * without despising the poorest, or vilest Wretch, who seem'd capable of receiving any Benefit from him.

THE Influence of his Goodness was general and extensive, for it reached to the Bodies of Men too. The Miseries of this Nature moved his Pity, and engag'd his Help, *for he went about doing good, and healing all oppress'd of the devil*. His doing Good was not confin'd to one Sort of Evils and no more, for he *healed all manner of diseases*, † desirous to be universally Beneficial to all, who needed his Assistance.

AND that which still adds to this lovely Character of our dearest Lord, is, that he sought all Opportunities of doing Good; nor did the many Injuries he met with prevail with him to desist. His kind Dispositions, and extended Charity, overcame every Difficulty in his Way; and his earnest Desire to recover Men out of the Snare of the Devil, made him both active and zealous.

* Heb. vii. 26.

† Matt. iv. 23:

NEVER fure was fo much Goodnefs abused in fo vile a Manner as his was; nor Actions fo good in themfelves, and fo beneficial in their Confequences, ever fo maliciously traduced.

THE World, fermented with Prejudices and Paſſions, and governed by a blind, bigotted Zeal, regarded neither the Holinefs of his own Life, nor the Good he did to others. Tho' he did nothing that was really Ill, yet there was not wanting thoſe, who made it their Buſinefs to collect Materials of Scandal, to deſtroy his Uſefulnefs, and prevent the Good he intended; as if it was a much more defirable Bleſſing, that the World ſhould abound in Wickednefs, than that a Reformation ſhould take Place, and be encouraged.

BUT this furely is countenancing Sin, and discouraging every Thing that is Juſt and Righteous for the Devil's Sake.

HAVING thus given you the Character of our Bleſſed Saviour, *as he went about doing Good*, Shall it not have an Influence on our Praſtiſe? Shall it not be our Concern to imitate him, according to our ſeveral Abilities, Stations, and Opportunities; and encourage us ſteadily to purſue every Deſign, that has a proper Tendency to do Good? *Let the ſame Mind be in us that there was in him,** and let us account it our Honour, as well as Duty, *to walk as he walked.* †

2. I Proceed to conſider our Obligations herein to imitate our Lord and Saviour.

OUR Obligation to be and do Good, carries its own Conviction along with it. It is an Imitation of the higheſt Excellency and Perfection.

* Phil. ii. 5.

† John i. 2, 6.

How Godlike a Temper and Disposition is it to employ our Thoughts, Cares, and Endeavours, for the Good of Others? 'Tis the best, and most delightful Service in the World, and one of the great, necessary, and substantial Parts of that Religion and Holiness, *without which no Man shall see the Lord.* * What else is Religion, but an Acknowledgement of the Divine Perfections, and a studious, conscientious Endeavour to imitate them, in the Tenor of our Lives, and the Actings of our Minds. *Be perfect therefore, for our Heavenly Father is perfect.* †

THESE are Persons of a very mean, and narrow Spirit, and act below the Reason and Dignity of their Natures, who mind only themselves, and their own Interest, and do not pity, pray for, or endeavour to reclaim those *who are treasuring up to themselves Wrath against the Day of Wrath, and the Revelation of the Righteous Judgments of God.* || This is One Part of the Misery and Wretchedness of accursed Spirits, that they are of a Temper contrary to God, envious, malicious, and wicked, *going about seeking whom they may devour.* * *The Wisdom that is from above, is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easie to be entreated, full of Mercy, and good Fruits, without Partiality, and without Hypocrisie.* †

AND can we write after a fairer Copy than that which our Lord has left us in his own Example?

WHAT was of a Miraculous Nature in his Actions, we cannot imitate him in, such as *healing the Sick, or, raising the Dead,* but what in his Life was imitable by us, or what did not ex-

* Heb. xii. 14.

† Matt. v. 48.

| Rom. ii. 5.

* 1 Pet. v. 8.

† James iii. 17.

ceed our natural Powers, nor disagree with our Condition; what he did in a private Capacity, as Subject to the divine Law, we may, and must follow.

A L L the Laws he prescrib'd for the Conduct, of human Life, and to dispose us for the Rewards of eternal Life, he practis'd himself, nor did he ever allow any Thing in himself, which he condemn'd, as criminal, in Others.

'T I S an Example absolutely perfect, free from all those Defects, Infirmities, and Errors, which the best of Men are liable to, in the present State of Distance, and Darkness.

B E S I D E S not only the Nature and Reason of doing Good enforces our Obligation, and the exactness of our Lord's Example in all its Branches, imitable by us; but it appears farther, as he was design'd, and on Purpose sent into the World to give us an Example of Holiness, and doing Good. It is hereby evident, that our Duty is possible, and that the Difficulties of the Christian Life are not so great, as to deter us from it. We are not obliged to Impossibilities to secure the Favour of God, or the Happiness of Heaven. Our Lord has design'dly walked before us in the Way of Life, and thereby taught us, how we are to behave in every Relation, and under every Character, and has given us the fullest Assurance that our Conformity to him in Holiness, is the infallible Antecedent of our being for ever Happy with him.

A N D the more effectually to assist us herein, in Compassion to our Weakness, God has promised the gracious Aids of his blessed Spirit, upon our humble Application: *For if natural Parents know how to give good Gifts unto their Children,*

*den, how much more will our Heavenly Father give his holy Spirit to them who ask him. ** It is our own Fault if we are not both Holy, and Happy: Forasmuch, as no Assistance shall be wanting to enable us *to every good Word and Work,* if we sincerely ask it, for *he is faithful that promised †*

To add no more under this Head, consider the Obligations of Gratitude which are on us, to go and do likewise.

IT is the Example of our best Friend, from whom we have received the greatest Blessings, and of a glorious Saviour, who has done, and suffered all, that was necessary to satisfy divine Justice, to reconcile us to God, and to secure to us the Crown of undecaying Glory.

THUS lived, and at last dyed the great Redeemer of Mankind, *leaving us an Example.*

BLESSED be God, that there are some, and how great a Blessing would it be to the present Age, if there were many more such Worthies, who are convinc'd of their Obligation, and act agreeable to their Profession and Hope, by *going about to do Good.* Can we refuse to Honour and Esteem, to encourage, and assist them for his Sake, whose Example they endeavour to follow? *The Blessing of the Lord be upon them, and establish the Works of their Hands.*

IF we have any real Love to God, or to his Son Jesus Christ, it will have this happy Effect upon us. The Holy God cannot but love all those, who are holy, and conscientiously endeavour to promote it; and those who are Holy will be like-minded towards all who are concer-

* Luke xi. 13.

† Heb. x. 23.

ned, that others may be *Holy in all manner of Conversation.*

3. I Would now close all by considering to what Purposes these Truths may serve, agreeable to the Occasion of our present Assembling.

1. How unsutable to this Example is their Character, and Conduct, who instead of *going about to do Good*, are contriving how to defeat the Purposes of the Reformation, and to debauch the Morals of the People?

THIS has been in every Age the Method, which the Enemies of all Religion, and the Good of human Societies, have eagerly pursued to corrupt the Manners of the People, and to enter into Measures either to skreen the Offenders from the Executions of Justice, or to expose and vilifie their Character who withstand, and endeavour to restrain such Enormities.

How desirable a Blessing would it be, how full of happy Consequences to the present, and succeeding Generations, had the Riotings of Men no Advocates to plead their Cause, or none to countenance them?

To what Height of consummate Wickedness, how malignant in Sin must that Age be grown, when Men shall glory in reproaching the Christian Name, and triumph on the Growth of Wickedness?

MATTERS are then come to a wretched Pass, when it shall be thought good Breeding, to fill up a Conversation with a Satyr on Vertue, and those who espouse its Cause. When such shall pass for fine Gentlemen and Persons of the most refined Taste, who jest with Eternal Flames, and wish their Damnation at every Sentence.

SURELY such forget the Obligations both of Reason and all Religion, who first contrive Methods of Lewdness, and strive who shall be most skilful in the Arts of Sinning, and then *make a Mock of it.* † Prodigious Madness! to make our Sport of that, which provokes God to give a full Scope to his Vengeance. *Oh! my Soul, enter not thou into their Secrets.* ††

VARIOUS are the Methods by which, at all Times, Schemes have been formed, to render Vice agreeable and modish, and to render all attempts for the rescuing Men from their Folly fruitless.

WHAT REPROACHES and CALUMNY have been contrived, and industriously spread with design, either to render the Reformation it self dishonourable, or to blacken the Characters of the Persons concerned in it. But how mean and base is such a Conduct? And for which, in Cases of a much inferior Nature, the Authors would be despis'd, and hiss'd at.

THE World has often been told of this injurious Treatment, and as often challenged to support the Facts pretended, with proper Evidence; and I perswade my self, could any such Thing have been done, we had long since heard of it with an outrageous Clamour.

'TIS no Wonder at all, that those, who make a Scoff of all Religion, should do their utmost to oppose the Progress of the Reformation. To make a Jest of moral Goodness, and of those Things which have a proper Tendency to promote it, is the highest Kind of Impiety.

† Prov. xiv. 9.

†† Gen. lxxix. 6.

MEN of dissolute Lives cry down Religion, because they would not be under the Restraints of it. They hate it because they are reprov'd by it. Of this our Lord assures us, † *Men Love Darkness rather than Light, because their Deeds are Evil: For every one that doth Evil hateth the Light, neither cometh to the Light, lest his Deeds should be reprov'd.* I know not how it comes to pass that there are so many who account any Thing witty, that is either debauch in it self, or that has a Tendency to promote it.

NOR is it at all strange, that those, who have been detected by our worthy Reformers, should be clamorous and noisy; tho' this is very unreasonable too: Because hereby they might have been awakened to a just Sense of their Crime, and a proper Improvement might have been made of their present Disgrace and Conviction, to very happy Purposes. I am well assured, that many unjust and peevish Stories have been spread by such Persons, in Revenge for their Kindness, who *delivered them from the Snare of the Devil, and attempted to save their Souls from Death.*

BUT 'tis very Surprizing, that Persons of Sense and Sobriety should give into such Scandal, and be impos'd on and deluded with such Clamour, to the Prejudice of the Societies, when it has been so often advertis'd both from the Pulpit and the Press; that there is not the least Foundation for it, and that no criminal Charge against any of their Members can be proved; or if it can, that proper Notice might be given of it, in order that such may be disown'd, and discarded at once. But this Method of Calumny

† John iii. 19, 20.

is one of their artful Contrivances, who go about to defeat the Success of the Reformation.

BESIDES, is it not very evident that there are a Set of Men, who go about to ensnare Persons, by drawing them into GAMING-HOUSES, that there they may have an Opportunity of cheating them of their Estates, and of corrupting their Morals ?

THESE are common Nufances, and call for your utmost and united Endeavours to suppress. This is laying the Axe to the Root of the Tree, fruitful of every Thing that is destructive of the Happiness of human Society.

How many are the sad Instances of Persons ruined by such Practices, by those who have no other way of supporting themselves in their vitious Extravagancies, but by such Fraud and Deceit, and afterwards value themselves upon their Art of Cheating, accounting it more witty and genteel to be Sharpers, than honest Men ?

WHEN once the gaming Humour prevails, how soon is the young Captive lost ; how shamefully is his Business neglected, and a Habit of Idleness contracted, to the utter Ruin of of Himself and Family ? I heartily wish that you could say, This unaccountable Way of Life had been effectually restrained and subdued ; and that there was no farther Occasion to quicken you to an unwearied Application to make a stand against the Remainders of it.

AGAIN, have there not been new Scenes of Impiety contrived, and added to the old ones, against which you have long and vigorously acted, as if it was an honourable Undertaking to Seduce to Riot and Excess, and to degrade the human Nature, by acting the meanest and most ridiculous Part ? Of this Nature and Tendency are
our

our MASQUERADES. What else can be the real Consequence of them, but to embolden Men in their Sins, and to take off that just Regard to Vertue, which ought to be constantly maintained and cultivated?

THE Notice the Bishop of *London* has taken of this pernicious Invention, in the Sermon he preached before your Societies, must give a sensible Pleasure to every good Man; and what he has justly observed on this Practice, is sufficient to expose its Absurdity. And it would be a happy Consequence, if the Conviction was fasten'd on Persons of Superior Rank.

HOWEVER these may think themselves guarded from the ill Effects of such an Assembly, and out of Danger of Infection, from their steady Principles of Morality; yet, methinks, out of Compassion to others, who are in apparent Danger of being debauched by the artful Methods of Vice, and Lewdness, it should be discountenanc'd.

How extended are the Influences of Example, especially of those in high Stations? What is more common, than to see Persons of lower Rank do what the Men of Quality do? By this Means Sin gathers Strength, and grows fashionable, and all its Reproach is thought to be avoided.

THERE is one Observation, which I cannot forbear to make; and which, in my Opinion, carries in it an Acknowledgment of the Impropriety of those Assemblies, *viz.* That while we were under Apprehensions of the Plague, which made such dreadful Havock in a neighbouring Nation, they were order'd to be discontinued: And when God was pleas'd to hear the united Prayers of his People, and to save us from the

Pestilence

Pestilence that walks in Darknefs, and from the Destruction which wasteth at Noon Day, can the Revival of them be thought a proper Return to him for this Salvation? Do we thus requite the God of our Mercies? How unreasonable is it? How unwise?

THESE are some of the Methods which tend to defeat the Purposes of the Reformation, and which call for a great deal of Courage and Firmness of Mind to engage you to a steady Opposition against 'em, and to engage Others to join with you in the same Service.

2. LET the Consideration of the Example of our Blessed Saviour *in going about doing Good* engage Persons of all Ranks to be of the same Spirit, and Temper.

THE Obligation equally lies on all to exert themselves in doing Good, as far as their several Stations and Abilities enable them. And as long as Sin and Wickedness is so very common, and insolent, we cannot want either Occasion or Opportunity for it.

WHAT can be more becoming our Profession of Christianity, or more agreeable to the Principles of Humanity, than to be so far concerned for the Good of Others, as to leave no Methods untried to promote it?

IT is the most generous, and a truly divine Disposition to endeavour to reclaim, and convert a Sinner from the Errors of his Ways. How pleasing will be the Reflection on such a Conduct, whatever the Success of it may prove?

How inconsistent with all our Obligations both as Men, and as Christians is their Neutrality, who pretend to wish well to the Reformation, and yet do nothing to help it forward?

Vice

Vice is not to be forced out of its Entrenchments, but by an active Opposition. Persuasion with some, and necessary Severities with others, according as the Laws direct, are with many harden'd Offenders little enough to keep them within the proper Bounds of Decency, and good Manners, and makes a Confederacy for the Support of Vertue absolutely necessary.

WHAT a mean Opinion must that Person have of Religion? How languid his Love to his Neighbour, or his Concern for the publick Welfare, who can see Immorality triumphing upon the Ruins of every Thing that is lovely, and Praise-worthy, with an unconcern'd Spirit? Is it not a cruel Temper to see Multitudes destroying themselves, and yet do nothing to prevent it?

THESE Societies have Discouragements, and Difficulties enough before them, arising from the Enemies of God, and the Friends of the Devil: And can you who profess to be convinc'd of their Legality, and Usefulness sit down easie under this Reflection, that by your Indifference you have still added to their Number, and Weight?

THIS is a Service in which all the Sober Persons among us of every Denomination agree in, and about which there are no differing Sentiments: And one would be tempted to believe, from this happy Concurrence, that it should not be difficult to engage many more in it.

WHAT if the same Narrowness of Spirit, the same Cowardice of Temper had influenc'd Others, as it does those, who desire to be excused, to what Heights of Wickedness had we been brought by this Time; instead of being a Praise in the Earth, we had been as wicked as

Sodom and Gomorrah : Or, what if these Societies should through their various Discouragements be dissolv'd, and the Wicked be left to act without Controul, how fatal must be the Consequence? If a Prophane Contempt of God, if Drunkenness and Lewdness, if a Prophanation of the Lord's Day; if Chambering and Wantonness, and the vilest Abominations are still committed in the midst of us, in spite of all the Opposition made, how melancholy would the State of Things be, were there no Checks, no Restraints at all.

T H E R E are various Ways by which you may serve this common Interest of Christianity, and in every Station, and Relation of Life contribute to Holiness, and Reformation of Life, the End in View.

Y O U R engaging personally with the Gentlemen of the Society would give a considerable Strength, and Encouragement to it. The more are concern'd in it, the more extensive Good we may reasonably expect from it. Your Influences would spread farther and wider, and the several Haunts of Iniquity would be more effectually inspected, and routed.

B U T if some Circumstances peculiar to your Case; will not admit of such an active personal Service, how much may you forward it either by Stated, or Occasional Contributions, to support it.

Y O U cannot be insensible, that it must be attended with considerable Charges, arising from the legal Prosecutions of various Offenders, and it may be supported too by a Fund raised to evade the Law, or to distress the Society through the Charge necessarily attending, in hopes, by this Method, to weary and dissolve it.

OR you may serve this Design by assisting the Magistrate with Informations against the Guilty, in order that the Laws in Force against Prophaness and Immorality may be duly Executed: Nor is this so odious, as some would represent it; 'tis an Act of the greatest Kindness, and Charity to our Neighbour to prevent his being surpriz'd with a long Train of Miseries in this, and the future State.

OR it may be done by your fervent Prayers to God, that he would succeed the Reformation, and effectually restrain the crying Sins of the Nation, *that the Wickedness of the Wicked may come to an End, and the Just be establish'd.* *

So likewise in the several Stations wherein you are placed, you may do much, and good Service towards a thorough Reformation.

How much depends on the Care, Instructions, and Restraints of Parents, and I cannot but express my own Fears, that this is one very great Reason, why this Work makes such slow Advances: Because there is no more prudent Care taken to form the rising Generation to the Practice of Religion and Vertue, *by training them up in the Nurture and Admonition of the Lord.* †

IN like manner, if Masters of Families would more narrowly inspect the moral Conduct of their Servants, *and watch for their Souls, as those who must give an Account,* of what considerable Service would it be to the World. What can be expected, when these shall walk before their Household in the Ways of Iniquity, and allow the most shameful and scandalous Practices in themselves. If the Master will swear, and be drunk, and allow himself in the stated Pro-

* Psalm vii. 9.

† Ephes. vi. 4.

phanation of the Lord's Day, what should restrain the Servant from imitating his pernicious Example, or with what Appearance of Authority can he reprove such Irregularities ?

As Ministers we are strictly, and in a peculiar Manner oblig'd to watch over, and to warn Sinners of the Errors of their Ways, if peradventure God will give them a sight of their Sin and Danger, and recover them from their Iniquities: And Blessed be God, that there are many who have obtained Grace herein to be faithful. Lord ! Spirit thy Ministers with greater Degrees of Zeal and Concern for this Part of their Work, that they may give up their comfortable Accounts in the Great Day.

WITH what distinguishing Zeal should Magistrates *be a Terror to evil Doers, and a Praise to them who do well.* * These are under the Obligation of a solemn Oath with faithfulness to discharge this Trust committed to them. No wonder the People are unreform'd, when either the Magistrate is vitious himself, or discourages their Endeavours, who are concern'd to suppress Immorality. Such are unworthy of the Character, and a disgrace to the Bench, who become Patrons of Sin, either by conniving at, or sheltering Offenders from the Law. A good Magistrate is a publick Blessing, and a Bad one as great an Evil.

3. BE encouraged, from the Obligation you are under to imitate the Example of your Lord, to pursue thro' every Difficulty, what you have so happily begun towards reforming the present Age.

* Rom. xiii. 3.

NEVER fure was there greater Need of all your united Zeal, when Persons of all Ranks have fo notoriously corrupted their Ways, and the Measure of our Sin is fo visibly filling up.

I MENTION not this Remark, as if I had any Reason to suspect, that either your Resolutions are weakened, or your generous Attempts abated, but to dispose you to all vigorous Measures, consistent with the Wisdom of the Serpent, and the Innocence of the Dove.

I AM very sensible there are many Discouragements you have already met with, and more you must expect from the Indifference of some, and from the united growing Interest of Iniquity: But *be strong in the Lord*, be couragious in the Cause of your great Redeemer. He has shewn you the Way, and acted as the Reformer of Mankind before you.

WHAT you have already done has been of the greatest Service to Religion, and the Happiness of your Country. Your annual Accounts of the Progress made in the Cities of *London* and *Westminster*, and Places adjacent, are the Witnesses of your zealous Endeavours.

AND how happy would it be, if your *going about to do Good*, had put an effectual Stop to those Practices, to which you confine your Prosecutions, and which are so great a Reproach to a Nation professing Christianity?

BUT are there not the same Reasons and Motives for your steady, continu'd, and unwearied Application, that there were for your first entring into these Measures?

ARE there not the same lewd and disorderly Practices still committed? Are not our Streets filled with those Persons, whose Lives are continual Invectives against all Chastity and Sobriety?

Is it not notorious that there are HOUSES of RETREAT, where common Prostitutes shelter to betray the Giddy and Inconsiderate Youth? What Multitudes offer themselves to the Lustful Desires, and Vitious Inclinations of those, who greedily embrace such vile Offers? These serve as the Nurseries of Debauchery, and the Schools of Iniquity, where the Youth are first trained up in the Maxims of Impiety, and then hardened in their Lewdnesses.

HERE they are taught not to regard, or quite suppress the Upbraidings and Rebukes of their Consciences, in Opposition to their vitious Inclinations, 'till at last they are held under no manner of Restraint, but grow bold in the Commission of their Sins, and venture upon those Enormities, which expose them to the last Miseries in Life, to a wretched Death, and to the Horrors of an Eternal Hell.

HAVE you yet silenc'd the shocking OATHS and CURSES of the Prophane? Is there no more such Language heard? Never, in my Opinion, was it more common in our Streets. Who can expose the Wretchedness of that Folly, which defies the Vengeance of our Maker, and Affronts his Name? This is a Practice abhorred by the wisest Heathens, and should still be more offensive to Christians, from Considerations peculiar to their Character. Such Insults offered to God are intollerable. It is an Insult too upon the Sober Part of Mankind, who justly reverence the Name of God, and is Inconsistent with the Character of a Person of good Sense and Breeding, who ought to disdain an Action, that carries in it so many Circumstances of Rudeness. 'Tis astonishing, that Persons of Distinction in
Life,

Life, should in this Respect, herd with the Scum of the People, at the Expence of all Sobriety and Goodness.

HAVE you yet got the entire Mastery of the Sot? Are the Drunkards no more Reeling about the Streets? Or is the Sabbath kept sacred? How many Prophane it by exercising their Trades on that Day, to the Scandal of a Christian Profession? The Prophanation of this Day, for the most Part, lays the Foundation of future Immoralities, and leads the Way to the vilest Practices. What can be expected when Men shall frequent the Ale-House, or Tavern, instead of the House of our God, in Defiance of all the Laws human and divine? How many thus enter on a Life of Wickedness, and are drawn on by this Means, not only to a total Neglect of the Duties of Religion, but to fall in with the Sentiments of a Prophane Club, to ridicule all that is Sacred? This is a Sin as likely as any to *kindle Fires in the Gates of Jerusalem*, and Plagues too.

To restrain these, and the like Practices, calls for your continued Zeal, and warmest Attempts.

SEVERAL Things might be offered to engage you in the unwearied Prosecution of the Work before you.

YOU have the Example of our Great Lord and Master, *who went about doing Good*. His Errand into the World was to *save his People from their Sins*. * For this End was he manifested to *destroy the Works of the Devil*. † This Reflection cannot but give Life to all your Resolutions and Endeavours. The Example is both necessary

* Matth. i: 21.

† John i. 3, 8.

and encouraging, to animate you in the Discharge of your Duty, for which you are like to be vilified by the worst of Men.

HIS Example will likewise serve to support you under the basest Reflections for your Steadiness and Resolution. He submitted to the Revilings of the Scorners, tho' he never deserved it; and met with all imaginable Contempt, tho' he merited the highest Esteem. *And is the Disciple greater than his Master, or the Servant than his Lord?*

To be like our Lord, is to be, and to do as much Good, as it is possible for Men to be, or do according to their several Capacities and Conditions in Life.

WHEN you are ready to be discouraged in Well-doing, either from the continued Opposition of Bad Men, or from the Neglects, Neutrality, and Indifference of Others, esteemed Good; or thro' the malicious Interpretation of your best Actions in this Service, *consider him who endured such Contradiction of Sinners against himself, lest you be weary and faint in your Minds.* * Remember too, *that being reviled, he reviled not again, but committed himself to him, who judgeth righteously.* †

BESIDES, whatever may be the Success of your Endeavours to reform Mankind, you will have a present Peace of Mind on Reflection. And how great must be that Joy, which ariseth from the Testimony of a Good Conscience? The most sensual Man that ever was in the World, never felt his Heart touched with so delicious and lasting a Pleasure, as that which springs from a clear Conscience, and a Mind fully sa-

* Heb. xii. 3.

† 1 Pet. ii. 23.

tified with the Goodness and Integrity of his Actions:

BLESSED be God you have not laboured in Vain, tho' you have not been so Successful as every serious Mind would wish: The Numbers you have convicted of various Kinds of Immorality, computed by your last yearly Account, at Eighty Six Thousand Nine Hundred Forty Four, abundantly prove it; and 'tis to be hoped, that many of 'em have never *returned with the Dog to his Vomit, or with the Sow to the Mire.* This may be the Matter of your Rejoycing.

To add no more, be encouraged from the Prospect of your future Reward. Supposing the worst, that you should still make *resistance against Sin unto Blood*, as some of you formerly have done; *remember to whom you have committed the keeping of your Souls in Well-doing.*

A steady Belief of a future State of Happiness and Glory, was that, which made the Primitive Christians Victorious over the World, and gave them Courage to resist all the Pleasures and Terrors of Sense.

THE real Christian can Comfort himself under all the Difficulties he may meet with in doing his Duty, with proper Reflections on his End, which is Everlasting Life.

BE resolute then, be active in doing Good. Let Pity to the Souls and Bodies of Men, and a sincere Concern for their Welfare, in reference to this and the future World, quicken your Endeavours in the Work of the Lord.

THERE are many who wait for, and would be pleased to observe any false Steps you may make; let your Zeal therefore be regulated, and conducted with Wisdom and Prudence, and all your Measures be adjusted to the End in View.

The Example of our Lord Jesus Christ will direct you in the Manner, as well as in the Nature, of doing Good.

FINALLY, be stedfast and immoveable, always abounding in the Work of the Lord, forasmuch as you know that your going about to do Good shall not be in vain in the Lord.

FINIS







